



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Jill Fritz, Michigan Senior State Director

Testimony in opposition to HR 228 and HCR 22

Michigan House of Representatives, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee

March 2, 2016

Dear Members of the House Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation:

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization, and our many members and supporters in Michigan, I ask that you reject HR 228 and HCR 22 in support of the so-called "Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act." This federal legislation provides special provisions and blatant giveaways to lead ammunition and fishing equipment makers and a small class of elite members of trophy hunting organizations in order to gain some campaign cash and political support, and does not deliver anything practical or meaningful for rank-and-file hunters and fishermen in Michigan.

The NRA claims that this bill, and similar legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, will defend hunting, the implication being that hunting is somehow under siege. But traditional, fair chase hunting is not under threat – it's widely practiced and permitted in every state in the Union, and is already allowed on almost every inch of our national forests, Bureau of Land Management holdings, and even the vast majority of National Wildlife Refuges, not to mention all the state and private lands. This is not about hunter access. It's about delisting our state's wolves.

That's because the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act contains an amendment that removes federal protections for wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan under the Endangered Species Act, allowing hunting, trapping, snaring, and even hounding of this imperiled species to resume in the Great Lakes region. All of this despite the fact that Michigan voters *rejected* two proposals on the 2014 General Election ballot to allow wolf hunting.

What's more, the language in the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act makes the delisting of wolves immune from judicial review—*blocking off one of the three branches of government* and the checks and balances that we Americans hold dear. This is solely intended to prevent the courts from rebuking Congress and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in what would be the *seventh time*, for prematurely handing control of wolves over to reckless and irresponsible state killing and population reduction programs.

In a recent editorial about this, renowned scientist Dr. Adrian Treves, director of the Carnivore Coexistence Lab at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, said, "...for more than a century, our states' courts and statutes have recognized wild animals as a public trust. Think of wildlife as a legacy for future generations. When politicians make their decisions immune to judicial review, they are saying, 'We are not accountable for the public interest and the permanent wildlife trust.' Checks and balances exist to prevent tyranny."¹

I ask this committee not to support these resolutions urging Congress to open up our nation's wildlife refuges to unethical, unsporting, and dangerous practices to appease an extreme minority. Our nation's wildlife and wild lands belong to all of its people. Please reject HR 228 and HCR 22.

¹ *The Register-Guard*: "Wolf delisting decision not based on the facts," February 15, 2016, at <http://registerguard.com/rg/opinion/34040385-78/wolf-delisting-decision-not-based-on-the-facts.html.csp>